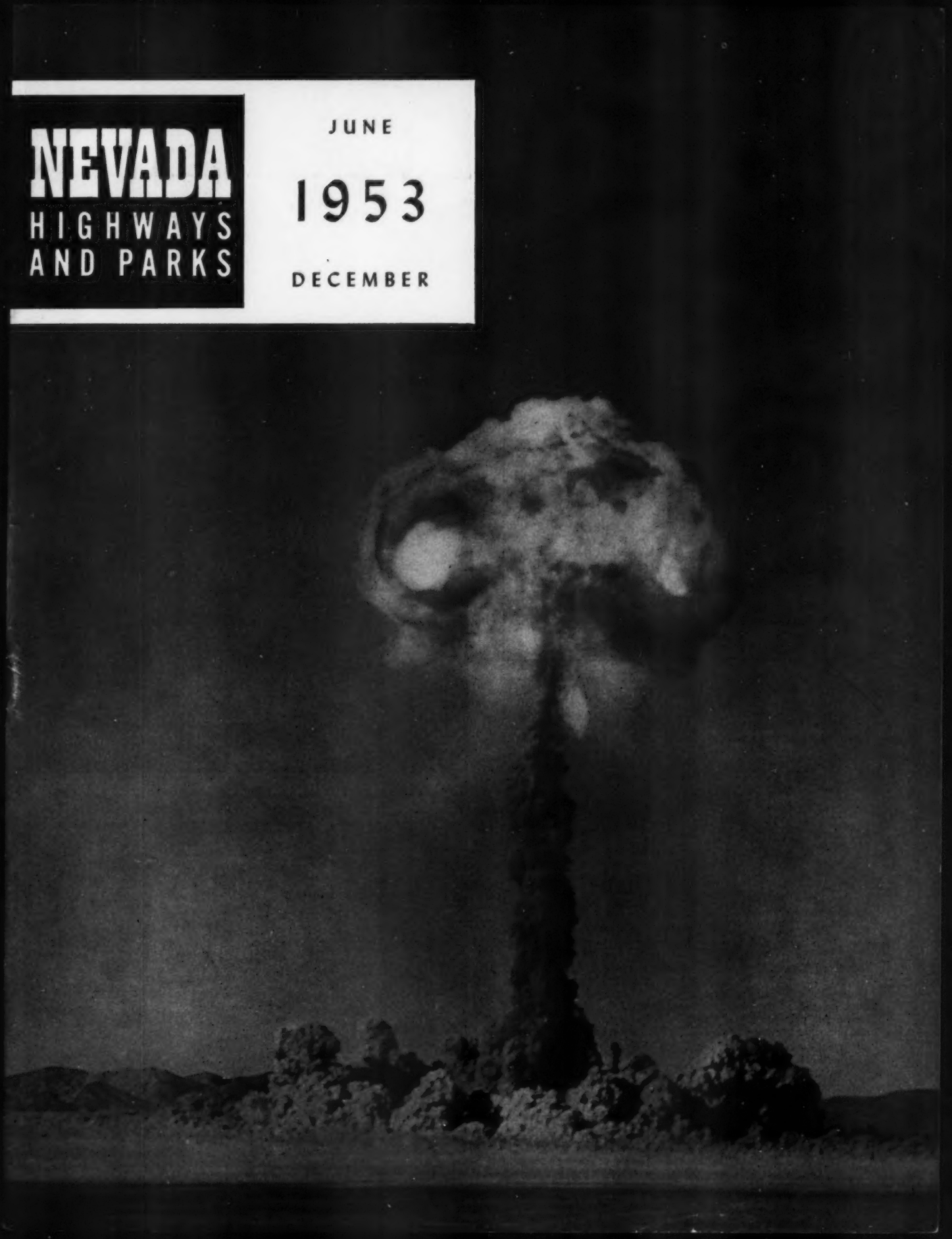
NEVADA
HIGHWAYS AND PARKS

JUNE

1953

DECEMBER



NEVADA HIGHWAYS AND PARKS

A Publication of the Nevada

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JUNE 1953 DECEMBER

Vol. XIII No. 2

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THE FRONT COVER

More than 20 tests of various types of atomic energy nuclear detonations have been made in the desert area of southern Nevada during the past two years by the Atomic Energy Commission. At Yucca Flat and Frenchman's Flats the national authorities have set up facilities for such testing purposes. Under different designations such as operation "Big Shot," operation "Doom Town," and "Observation Shot" Project these experiments have been conducted with success. Several of them have been open to groups, selected by the AEC, for observation. A typical, mushrooming cloud of fire, smoke, sand and radioactive particles resulting from such a test at Yucca Flat is shown on the Front Cover page of this issue. This vivid picture of a nuclear detonation was made prior to March 17, 1953. The March 17 test was observed by about 600 invited guests, including Governors, generals of the Army, representatives of the Navy, Air Force, newspaper men, magazine writers, civilian defense administrators, and radio and television groups. The 1953 series has been concluded.

NEVADA HIGHWAYS AND PARKS magazine is distributed gratis and is not to be sold.

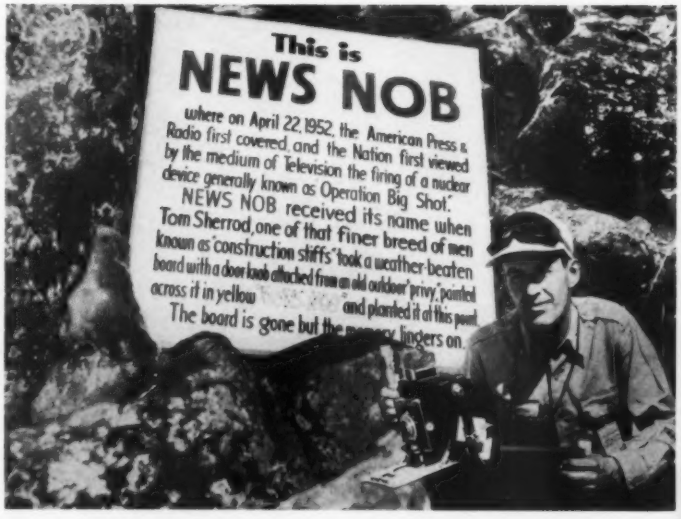
The series of photographs on pages 14 and 15 were taken by Edgerton Germeshausen & Grier, Inc., for the AEC.

All other black and white photographs picturing A-bomb blast by Adrian Atwater, staff photographer.

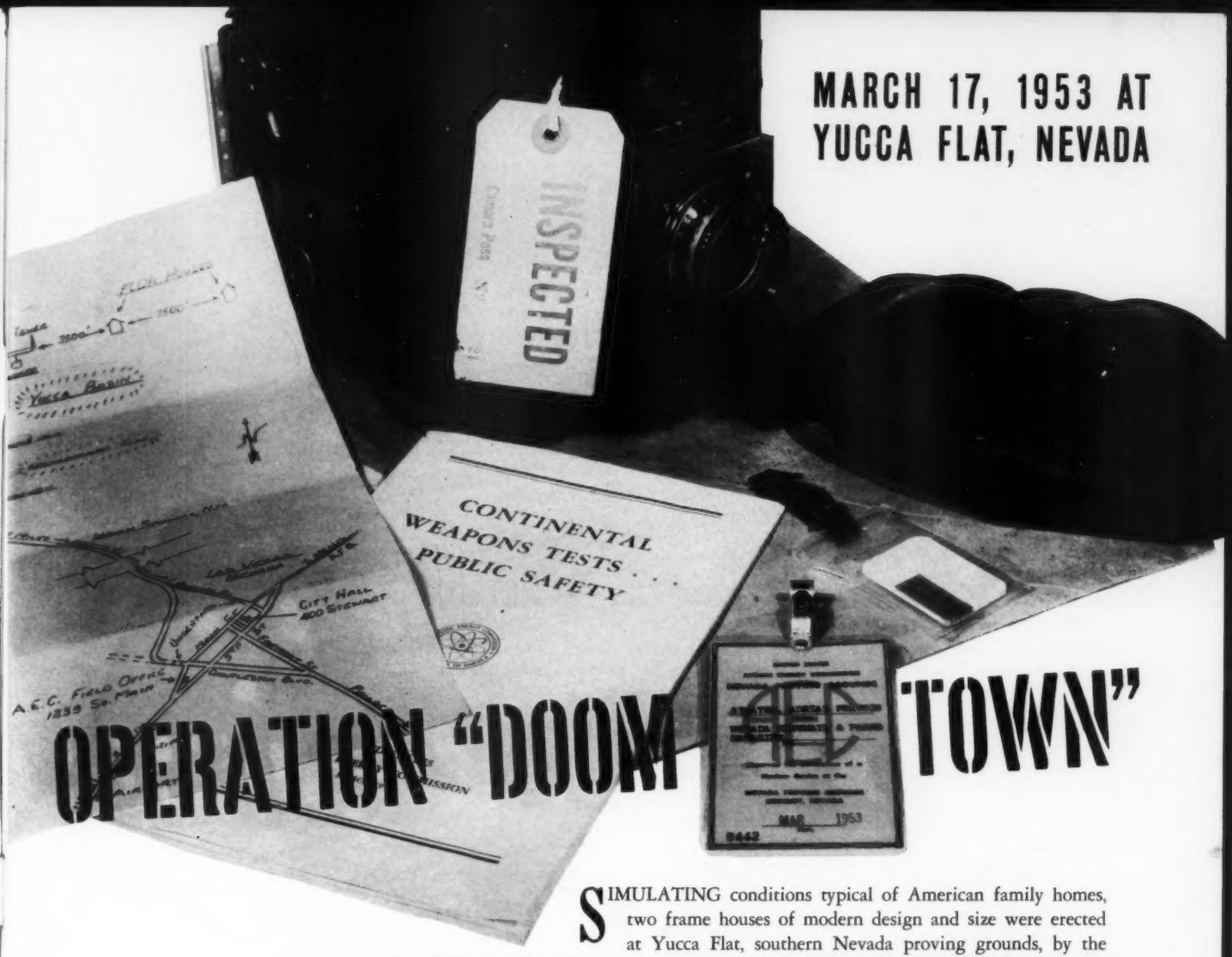
We also appreciate the help on design of format by Mel Mathewson and the Thos. Wilson Advertising Agency, Reno, Nevada.

Registration, at Las Vegas, for observers of operation "Doom Town."

On March 17, 1953, each State was represented at the test.


This is
NEWS NOB
where on April 22, 1952, the American Press & Radio first covered and the Nation first viewed by the medium of Television the firing of a nuclear device generally known as Operation Big Shot.
NEWS NOB received its name when Tom Sherrod, one of that finer breed of men known as construction stiffs took a weather-beaten board with a door knob attached from an old outdoor privy, painted
and planted it at this point
across it in yellow
The board is gone but the

News Nob, seven miles from ground zero, the nearest observation point.



MARCH 17, 1953 AT YUCCA FLAT, NEVADA

OPERATION "DOOM TOWN"

SIMULATING conditions typical of American family homes, two frame houses of modern design and size were erected at Yucca Flat, southern Nevada proving grounds, by the Atomic Energy Commission in cooperation with the Federal Civil Defense Administration to undergo an atomic test March 17, 1953. One house, a two-story, multi-bedroom type was located 3,500 feet distant from the spot where the bomb was dropped from a 300-foot steel tower. The second house, of similar construction, was 7,500 feet distant from ground zero. AEC officials wanted to find out what effect the atomic blast would have on such structures so that they could study results and develop safety measures for future protection of American lives and property. The houses were completely furnished. They also had mannikins to represent you and other human occupants. These mannikins were placed in normal positions in various rooms as well as in protective shelter units in the basements of the houses.

Distances from the explosion spot represent approximately 6 city blocks for the nearest house, and 12 city blocks for the farthest unit, as would prevail in most American cities of metropolitan status.

When the nuclear fission material was detonated, equivalent to about 15,000 tons of TNT, the results were not surprising but were very startling. As shown by the photographs on pages 14 and 15 of this issue, the 3,500-foot distant structure had no chance in the world and was completely demolished. The 12-block distant building came through in better shape but was severely damaged both inside and out.

Safety measures to meet similar conditions are being developed by the Federal Civil Defense Administration in conjunction with all the State groups. These data will be passed on to the public in order that the necessary safety measures may be set up to meet possible atomic bomb attacks.

From an experimental viewpoint the test at Yucca Flat was successful in every way. It is therefore wise to heed well the lessons taught on March 17, 1953.

NO DANGER

Atomic Energy Commission officials declare there is no danger to travel over Nevada highways from radioactive "fall out particles." U S 95, The Bonanza Highway, courses nearest the Yucca Flat test site, 45 miles north of Las Vegas. General terrain, colorful panorama, and expansive solitude of the Nevada desert are strikingly impressive along that highway. No restrictions are in force, but security measures at Mercury, the post of entry to the test site, are in force at all times.

Photos by Atwater, Staff

Out in front of the rocky, reserved seats at News Nob the desert has complete sway. Joshua trees, greasewood bushes and some wild grasses manage to grow in the desert soil. That's all. The rest of the landscape is a dusty, brown-colored, dry lake bed. The tables in the foreground were put there for the convenience of the VIPs who witnessed the demonstration.

Another of the numerous A-bomb tests at Yucca Flat assumed the shape of a wine glass.

Yucca Flat is a favorable locale for A-bomb tests. →

"OBSERVATION SHOT"

THE "OBSERVATION SHOT" project was a big show. Only 600 persons saw it "on location" but about 15,000,000 in the Nation saw it on television screens in their homes. It was the first public demonstration by the Atomic Energy Commission of an A-bomb blast. The locale was Yucca Flat in southern Nevada where the AEC maintains one of its continental proving grounds. Primarily the March 17, 1953 explosion was a scientific experiment but secondarily it was for the purpose of impressing Americans with the deadly seriousness of nuclear device detonations and the need for arousing a keener interest in civilian defense.

Besides six State Governors, AEC top brass, several Army generals, a dozen colonels and many officers of lesser rank, the Navy and the Air Force were well represented. GI's were stationed in the forward trenches for the first time, and the civilian defense organization from nearly every State had observers on the scene to view the terrific potentialities which the A-bomb packs.

To give the event widespread public notice, national news gathering association writers, special reporters from dozens of metropolitan newspapers, magazine writers who get by-lines in the million circulation bracket, television crews, radio announcers whose names are daily household callers, expert photographers by the score, and amateur photographers in greater number covered the event from a spot news as well as from the feature angle.

The AEC, in cooperation with the United States military forces, made every effort to see that the broadest coverage of the event would prevail. To provide background for the event—explosion of a tower-dropped missile, equal in energy to 15,000 tons of TNT—the entire group was taken to the proving grounds two days before the actual blast occurred. Citizens of Las Vegas, Nevada's city of destiny and the fastest growing city in the Southwest, acted as host to the gathering and showed every courtesy to those who came to see one of the greatest spectacles of human civilization—an atom bomb explosion.

On Sunday, March 15 the entire group was taken by caravan to Yucca Flat, in the heart of the desert about 65 miles north of Las Vegas, and guided over the ground to get "atmosphere" and impressions of things to come.

The AEC, in conjunction with the Civil Defense Administration, had constructed two houses for test purposes and these were the objects of interest of the observers. A tour had been arranged over the proving grounds, past the 300-foot steel tower, the first house 3,500 feet distant, and then later to the second house 7,500 feet away. At the second "house of doom" the observers were permitted to inspect every detail of the structure which was sturdily built to

Pre-explosion briefing of the 600 persons invited to view the A-bomb test on March 17, 1953. General Hodges, USA, at Camp Desert Rock auditorium tells them what and how. Many soldiers were stationed at Desert Rock during the spring tests.

Crowding around house No. 2 at Yucca Flat, the invited guests note every detail, listen to the radio and view television broadcasts on March 15, two days prior to the test. That little black spot on top of the tower housed the bomb before it dropped.

PROJECT

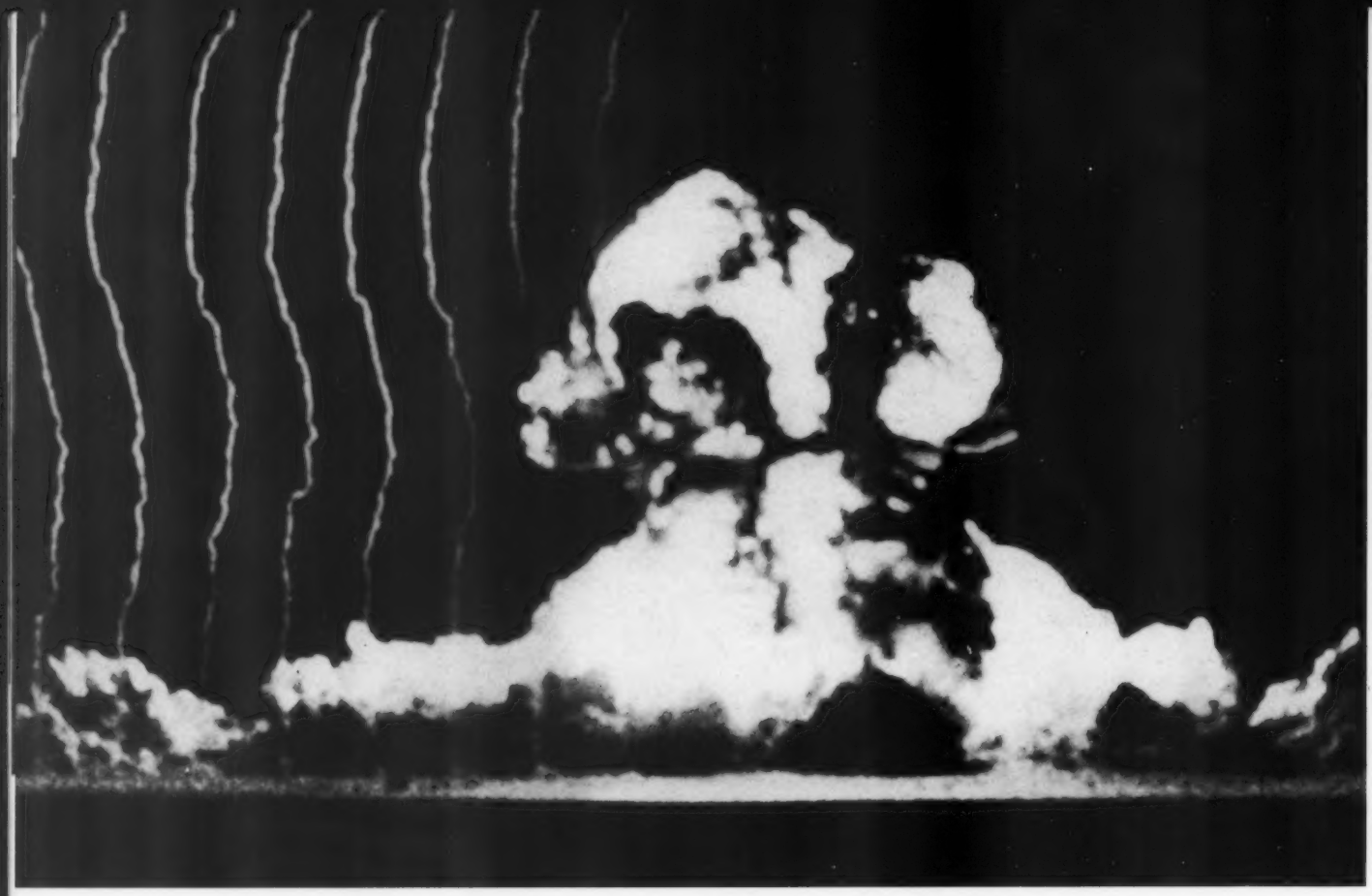
Photographers, newsmen and State safety personnel trying to assess, from 600 feet distant, the damage to house No. 1, closest to ground zero, four hours after the blast. Nearer ground was still "too hot" with radioactivity for closer approach.

Every precaution is taken by Atomic Energy Commission authorities to prevent any breach of security. Beyond this sign at Camp Murray, resident site of scientists and AEC personnel for the tests, no one is permitted to pass unless credentials are satisfactory. Camp Murray came into existence about three years ago when the southern Nevada desert country was selected as the site for A-bomb tests. All materials required for its construction were brought in by truck over the Nevada highways. The nearest railhead is at Las Vegas, 50 miles south of the new town.

This was the tactical problem, as explained by Colonel Bullock, involved in the March 17 test. For the first time in American history, soldiers of the line were in trenches less than 2 miles from ground zero when the A-bomb was dropped from a 300-foot steel tower. The assembly was in the theater at Camp Desert Rock. Camp Desert Rock, a military post on the southern Nevada desert, has facilities for accommodating several thousand military personnel and equipment. Theatrical folk frequently travel from Las Vegas to the camp and give their efforts gratis, to stage entertainment programs for the soldiers. In the desert these programs are enthusiastically received. During nontest seasons post personnel is kept at a minimum for security measures.

Photos by Atwater, Staff

AEC monitor with Geiger counter and protective apparel, from head to booties, carefully goes over the ground to measure strength of radioactivity, four hours after the blast. The Geiger counter is extremely sensitive to the volume of radioactivity at any particular spot.



Here's the frightening way the March 17 atomic blast looked to the camera on a black and white film. The wavy streaks at the left are rocket tracers to show wind current variability.

Former Governor Val Peterson, of Nebraska, now director of Federal Civil Defense Administration, inspects one of the automobiles after the explosion.

resist the big blast. Radio and television programs originated at this location on that Sunday afternoon and were broadcast to the Nation.

On Sunday, March 15, 1953, those two houses were intact, inviting, and the envy of all who saw them. Two days later the story was different. The AEC also had placed several dozen automobiles of various makes and models in strategic locations to test the effect of the blast.

On Monday about midnight the 19 buses loaded with observers left Las Vegas for News Nob, 65 miles distant. There the group waited for zero hour and the blast. Upon reaching News Nob where an unobstructed view of ground zero was to be had, television transmitting sets were trained on the spot and adjusted, radio announcers checked their script and mikes, and each photographer had a favorite spot for his camera, as time marched fast. Out over the Joshua trees and sagebrush in the sloping foreground at ground zero, seven miles from News Nob, a tiny light at the top of a tower from which the bomb would be dropped sparkled in the early morning darkness. This light remained visible until zero hour then was seen no more. The two houses could not be distinguished in the pitch-dark desert. A public announcing system at News Nob was used to keep

the crowd informed of developments and last-minute precautions.

As the first faint streaks of dawn poked over the distant hills the blast came. A vivid flash of light pierced the desert darkness and lighted up the entire countryside. It lasted but a moment or two then was gone. All eyes then turned toward the spot where the bomb had exploded. They saw a big ball of furiously churning fire, smoke, sand and debris rising rapidly from the ground in huge, rolling waves. The afterglow remained for several minutes while the mushrooming cloud continued to rise then drift away and apart. The sun was still below the horizon but daylight was coming fast. Broad streaks of sunlight slanted over the mountain tops like ghostly fingers clawing at the heavens. Rumbling of the shock wave continued for nearly five minutes, bouncing back and forth from one mountain wall to another.

Down on Yucca Flat at ground zero a heavy fog of dust obscured the two houses which had been guinea pigs to the full impact of the blast. Soldiers in trenches about 2,000 yards from ground zero, for the first time, had observed the shot and lived through strange emotions.

The steel tower was completely dissolved and nowhere to be seen. House No. 1 was entirely collapsed and wrecked. House No. 2 was still erect but badly damaged. A big, circular, seared spot marked ground zero. Sagebrush had been toasted, Joshua trees blackened, sand bags scorched, but one lone lizard, apparently unharmed by the blast, was seen scurrying among the small rocks on the desert floor probably wondering what it was all about. "Observation Shot" became a part of history.

Mannikins, simulating live persons, were used in house No. 2 to determine effects of the blast at 7,500 feet distant from ground zero.

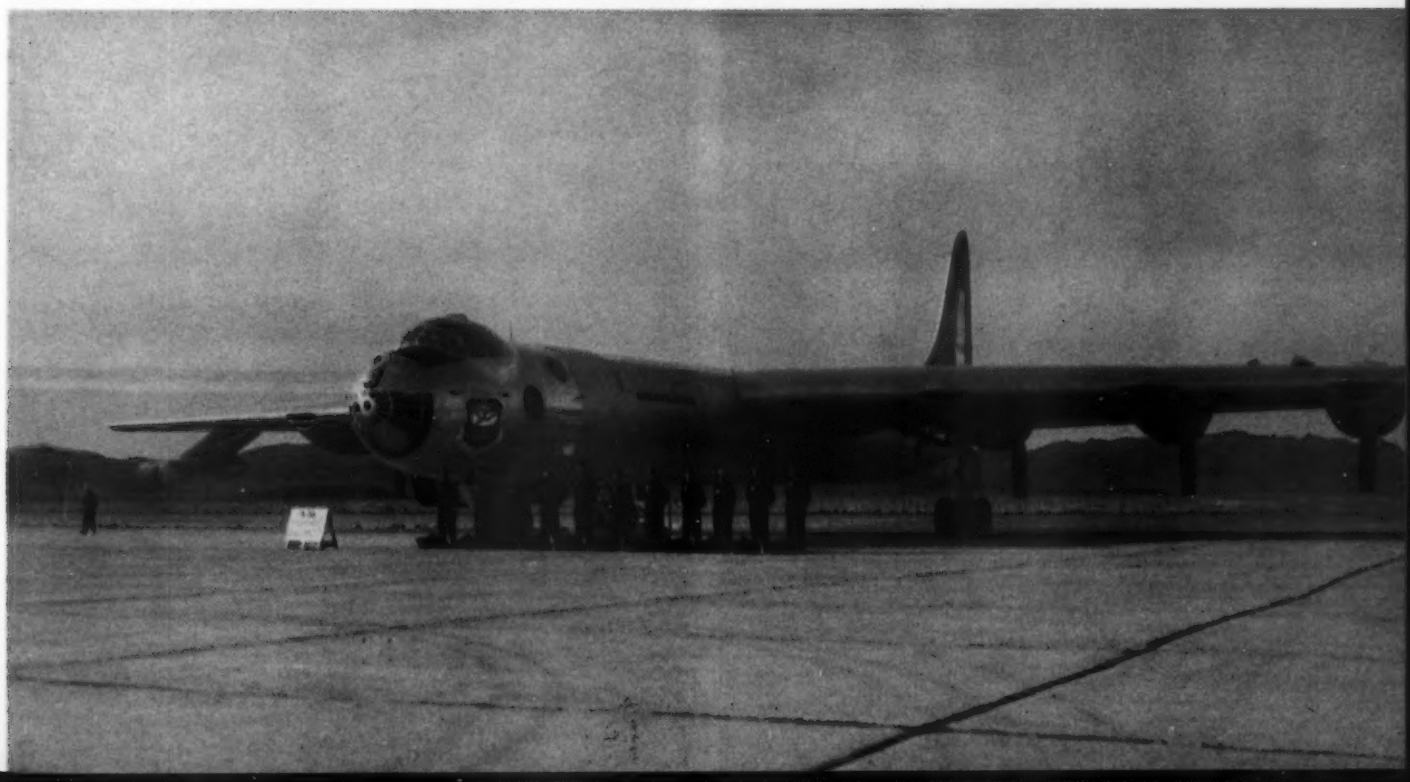
The clumsy looking, but most versatile and efficient helicopters were given a strenuous workout bringing personnel back from the advanced trench positions shortly after the March 17 blast at Yucca Flat.

Decontaminating a plane of radioactivity at the Indian Springs Air Field, about 20 miles from the Yucca Flat test site. A high range of mountains separates the air field site from the atomic test grounds in southern Nevada. Modern facilities have been established at the air base to maintain a number of these planes while they are on the special A-bomb test duty.

Beyond this sign you are "off limits" at Mercury, in the southern Nevada desert country, where the Atomic Energy Commission during the past several years has constructed facilities for carrying on tests of a varying kind. All persons and vehicles are stopped here and not allowed to proceed until complete and satisfactory identification has been definitely established. Mercury is situated about three miles in from Highway U S 95. Five years ago it was just desert; now its a sizeable community.

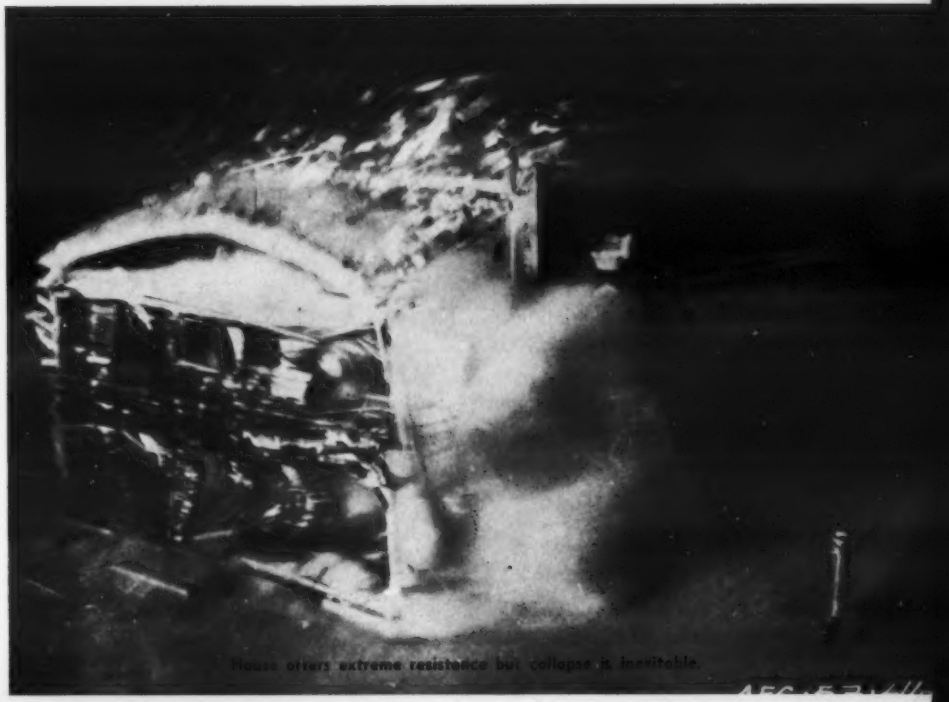
Many military planes similar to that shown on the opposite page are now capable of carrying and delivering to the target A-bombs in many categories. This B-36 was at Indian Springs Air Base, Nevada, when the March 17 test occurred at Yucca Flat. The test was observed by more than 600 persons connected with Civil Defense matters, newspaper and magazine writers, radio and television operators, and military personnel.

This reproduction shows the relative position of ground zero where the bomb was dropped from a 300-foot steel tower. Houses Nos. 1 and 2 were 3,500 and 7,500 feet distant. That would be equivalent to about 6 and 12 city blocks. House No. 1 was totally wrecked. No. 2 suffered severe damage and the steel tower was completely disintegrated and gone.



Light, heat and force from nuclear detonation strikes.

Fire quickly follows but is smothered by terrific blast.



House offers extreme resistance but collapse is inevitable.

Fire quickly follows but is smothered by terrific blast.

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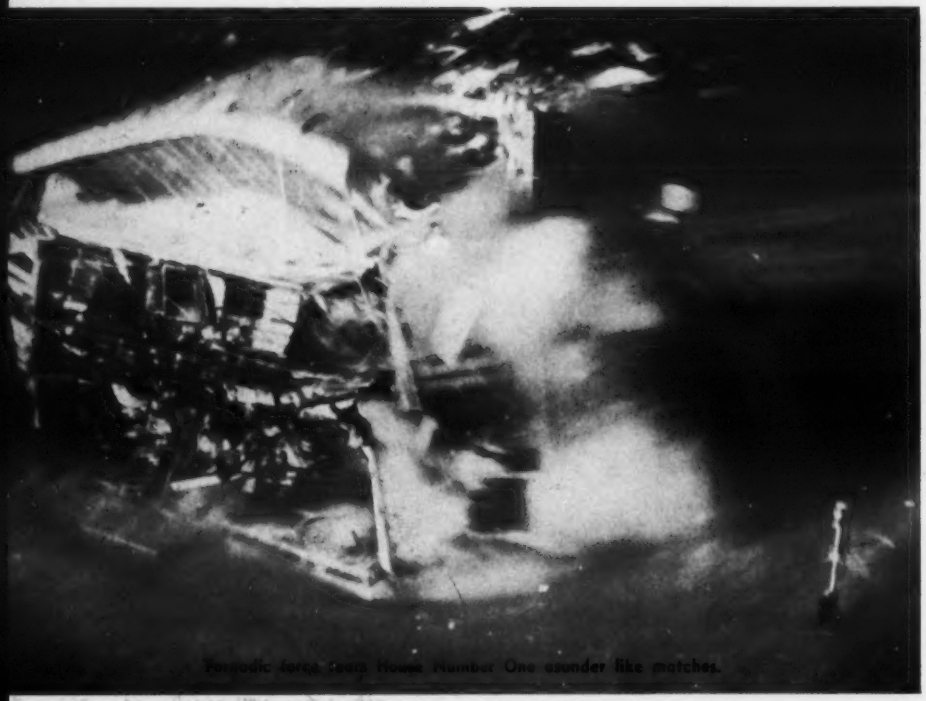
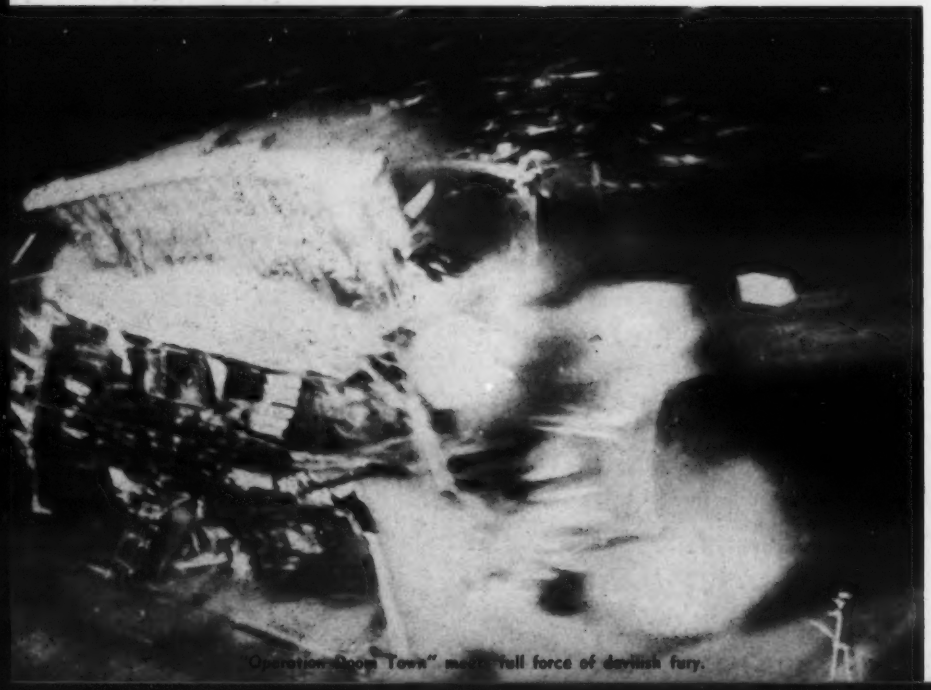
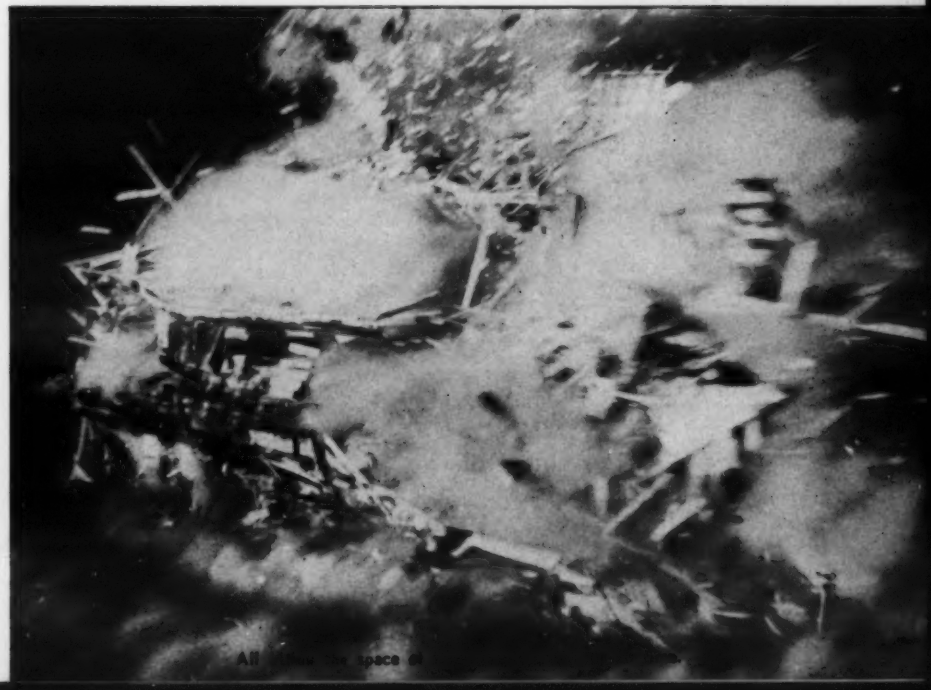


Periodic force tears House Number One asunder like matches.

About 3,500 feet distant from "Ground Zero" in Yucca Flats, Nevada



"Operation Doom Town" meets full force of devilish fury.



All that was left of space ship

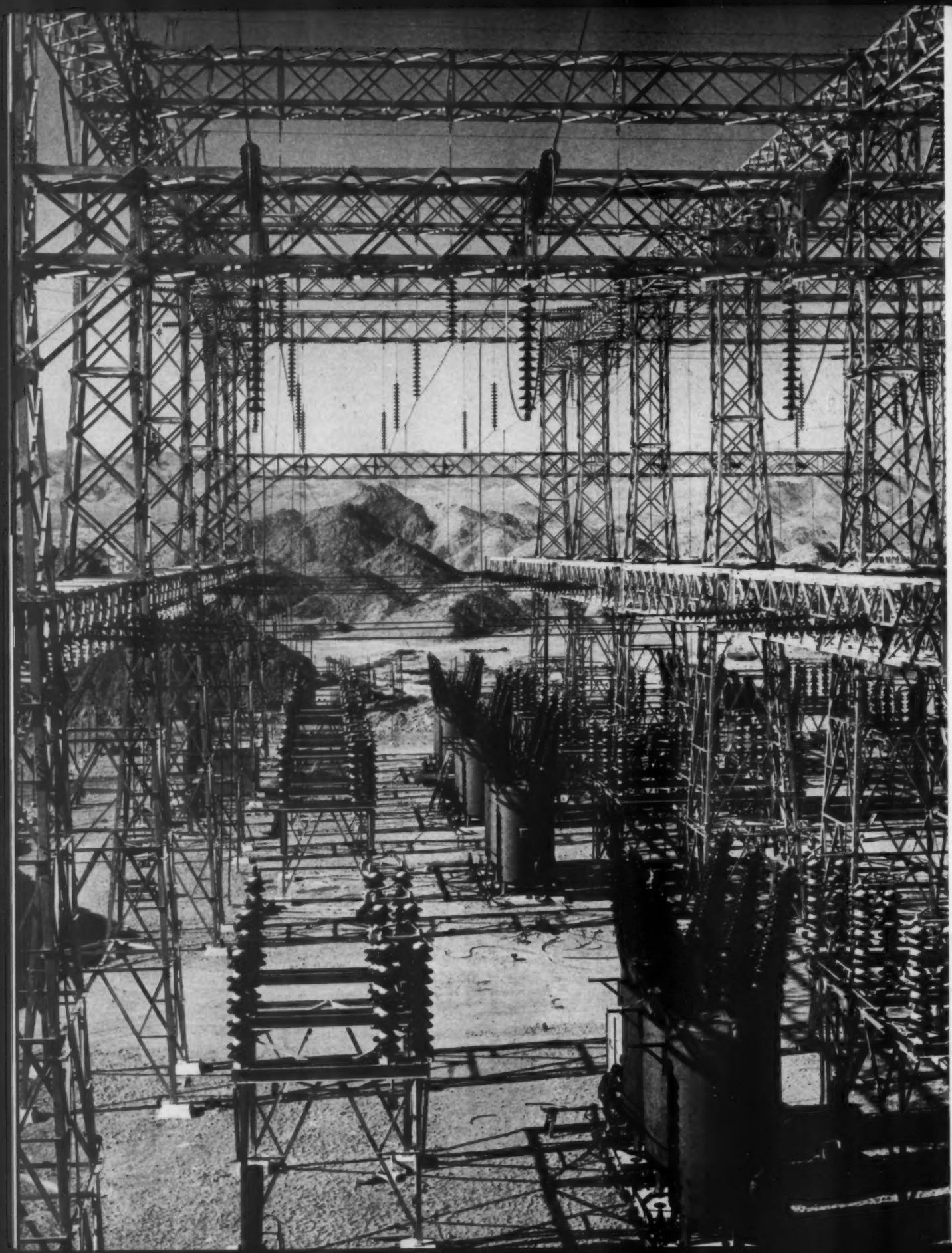
DESERT HOLOCAUST

Atomic bomb tests conducted at Yucca and Frenchman's Flats in southern Nevada, while becoming quite commonplace, must not be passed off lightly. They are serious in aspect and deadly in effect. Even the smallest one of the 1953 series, labelled officially as "Observation Shot," had a kick equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT explosive. All of the blasts are frightfully terrible yet unbelievably magnificant; they are hellish but beautiful; horrible yet spectacular. The whole range of human emotion is brought into play upon observing such a detonation. From a distance each appears as a gorgeous fireworks display on a gigantic scale. Nagasaki and Hiroshima tell the story differently, however, on what could happen should one be dropped on an American city by a relentless enemy. Just thinking of the terrible toll which is possible makes the shivers run up and down your spine.

The flashes can be seen, and the shock waves felt, for many miles from the explosion site. At ground zero nothing can survive. The earth is seared and blackened, steel towers vaporized, hot, death-dealing radioactive sand and dust particles spread out and ascend to great heights. At times this material is slow in dissipating and alleviating the dangers. No living thing exposed to the radioactive areas can escape some harm. It is not a pleasant thought to contemplate, but it is a fact.

It is the aim and objective of all scientists connected with the development of nuclear detonations to channel these harnessed forces into peacetime pursuits. To this end much research and effort has been expended to apply the energy to commercial fields. When this is brought about the Nation, and Nevada directly, should reap great benefits. Much progress has already been made and the near future may see the fulfillment of these efforts channelled into fields which will redound to the advancement, rather than destruction, of mankind's civilization. When the forces are brought under complete control the present grim visage may be ameliorated.

Out on Yucca Flat very little damage occurs. The desert is broad, open, and free from any cultural obstruction. If that terrific force was let loose in a thickly populated, closely built community the toll would be a holocaust indeed. So far, thank God, these holocausts occur on the Nevada desert where no one is harmed, but those forces of energy can be used for good or evil. God forbid that this totally destructive force ever should be used for an evil purpose.



the story of

DAVIS DAM

- Boating
- Fishing
- Flood Control
- Power
- Recreation

DAVIS DAM and power plant, another vital unit in the power, water and irrigation conservation program for the Great Southwest along the Colorado River, is now practically completed and functioning regularly. Consummation of this great engineering achievement by the Bureau of Reclamation, in the broad concept of national reclamation and usage of the natural resources along this world-famed river, supplements the already vast supply of electrical energy for the fast growing southwestern part of the United States. Incidentally, it creates additional recreational areas of great extent adjacent to that section of the Nation. While its benefits accrue more directly to Arizona, Nevada and California, indirectly it establishes immeasurable assets to the Nation as a whole.

Davis Dam and its incidental works block the Colorado in Pyramid Canyon, about 10 miles north of the point where Arizona, Nevada and California have a common meeting place. The country roundabout is rugged, with high mountains on each side paralleling the stream channel and displaying a broad valley which has been worn down slowly but persistently by this turbulent river through ages and ages of time. The surrounding country is sparsely settled but the land is believed to contain mineral riches which have not yet been exploited.

The dam itself is 34 miles west of Kingman, Arizona, and about the same distance southeast of Searchlight, Nevada, a famous old mining community of the past, and now serving as the Nevada gateway to the new recreational area opened up to the public with the functioning of the project. Picturesque and widely known, Needles, California, down the river another 55 miles, represents the nearest community along the river in the Golden State.

Davis Dam constitutes a link in the chain which is being forged to harness the unruly lower Colorado and bring its water and power potentialities into complete control and utilization for the large masses of people in the southwestern corner of the country. In this respect it is similar to Hoover Dam, Parker Dam, Headgate Rock Dam, Imperial Dam and Laguna Dam, all of which were built on this famous stream during the past half century.

Davis Dam in its broader aspects will service treaty provisions pertaining to division of Colorado River waters between the United States and Mexico, produce urgently needed hydro-electric power, and reregulate irregular water releases from Lake Mead through Hoover Dam plant for irrigation use downstream.

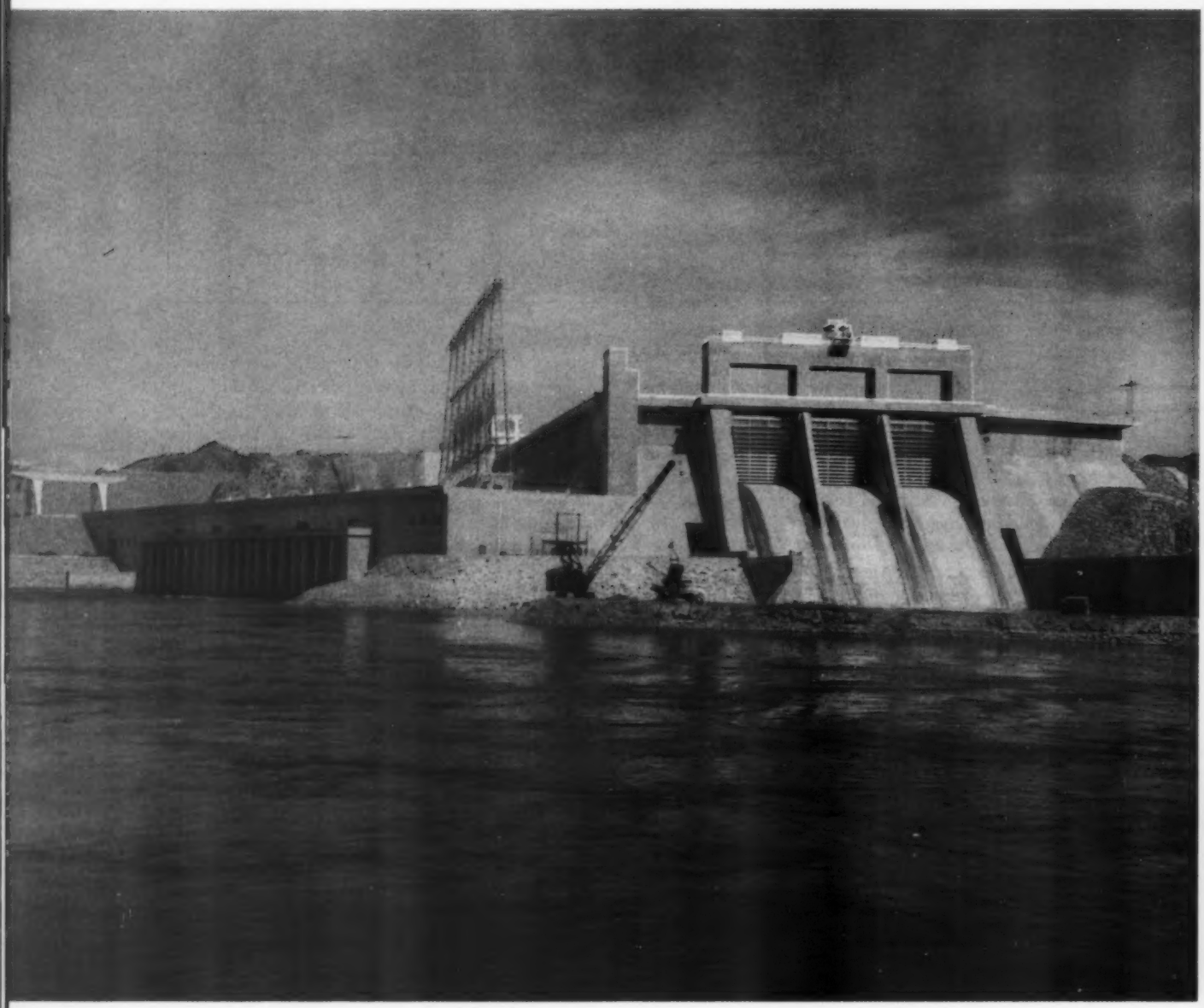
In addition to these major purposes, Davis Dam will contribute to flood control, navigation improvement, and irrigation and municipal water supplies. It will further reduce the river's silt load and provide for waterfowl and other wildlife protection. It will also create an attractive recreation area as its reservoir will offer exceptional opportunities for game fishing, boating, swimming, and all manner of other water sports.

Except for a limited area around the dam and adjacent government camp, the National Park Service administers the reservoir and all public lands surrounding it, together with the public lands on both sides of the Colorado River for a distance of four miles below the dam, as part of its Lake Mead Recreational Area.

It is a big dam—one of the largest in the entire West—and everything connected with its construction is on a huge scale. While it is not as high as Hoover Dam, as big as Shasta Dam, as comprehensive as Bonneville Dam, or as spectacular as Grand Coulee Dam, nevertheless its dimensions and bulk occupy a place high up the list of major dams constructed

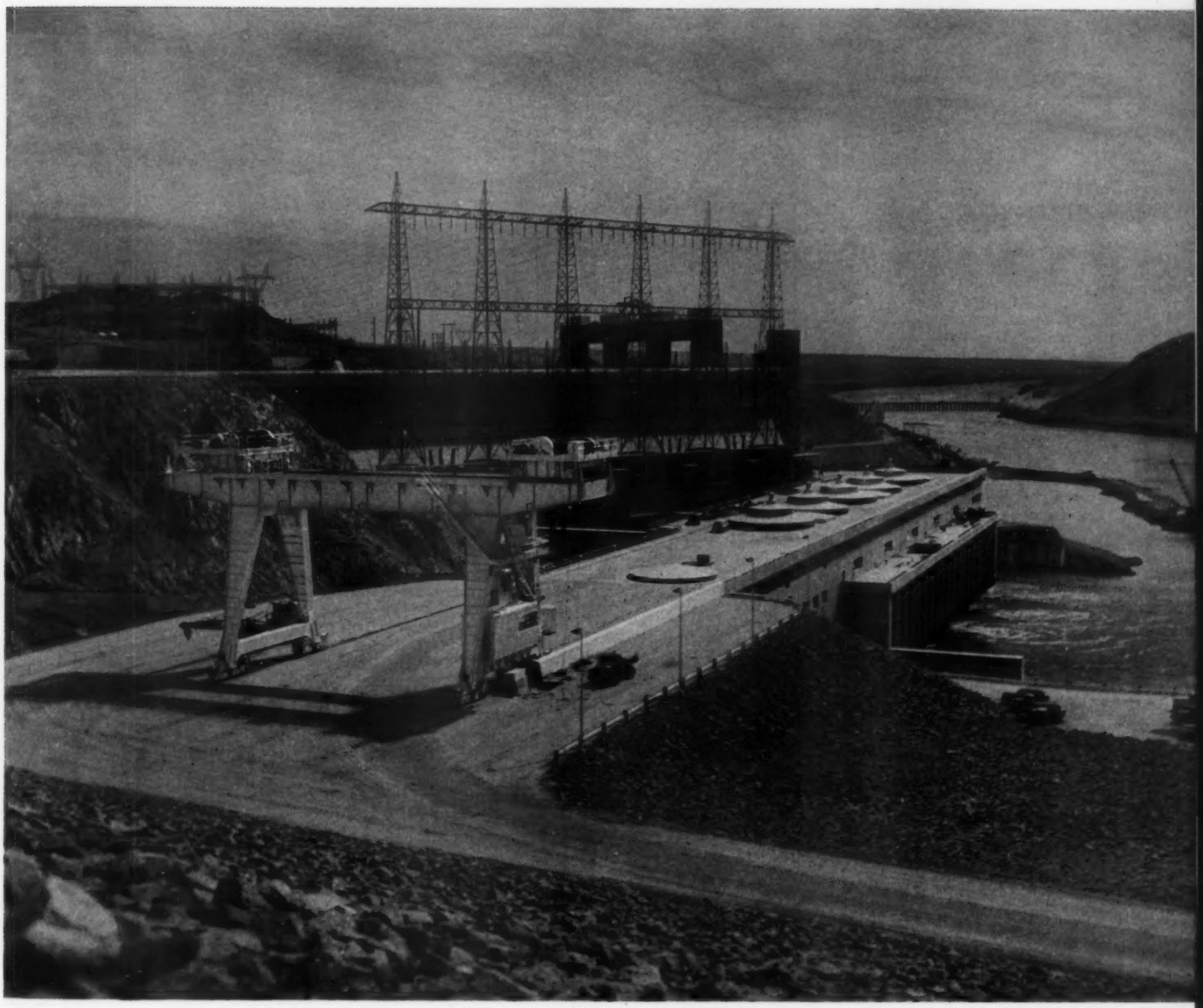
← Electrical switchyard at Davis Dam.

D A V I S



Davis Dam is just one unit in the grand over-all plan to control the Colorado River and make it produce electrical energy. About 60 miles below Hoover Dam it increases the power potential from the river by many million kilowatts. It likewise enhances the recreational and sports facilities of the great southwest. These are assets to the desert. Mohave Lake, as a consequence, stores water back of Davis Dam. The photo shows the face of the latest gigantic engineering achievement in the great Colorado River project.

D A M



An opposite view looking down the Colorado. Consequent energy at this unit will supplement the already enormous power output from units farther up the river. The entire southwestern area of the United States profits by these dams. It is a self-liquidating, long-time project. It is not quite as large as Hoover Dam and is of a different type construction. Actual construction of Davis Dam began in August 1942. The first unit went on the line in January 1951, and all five units were in full operation by the middle of June 1951.

↑

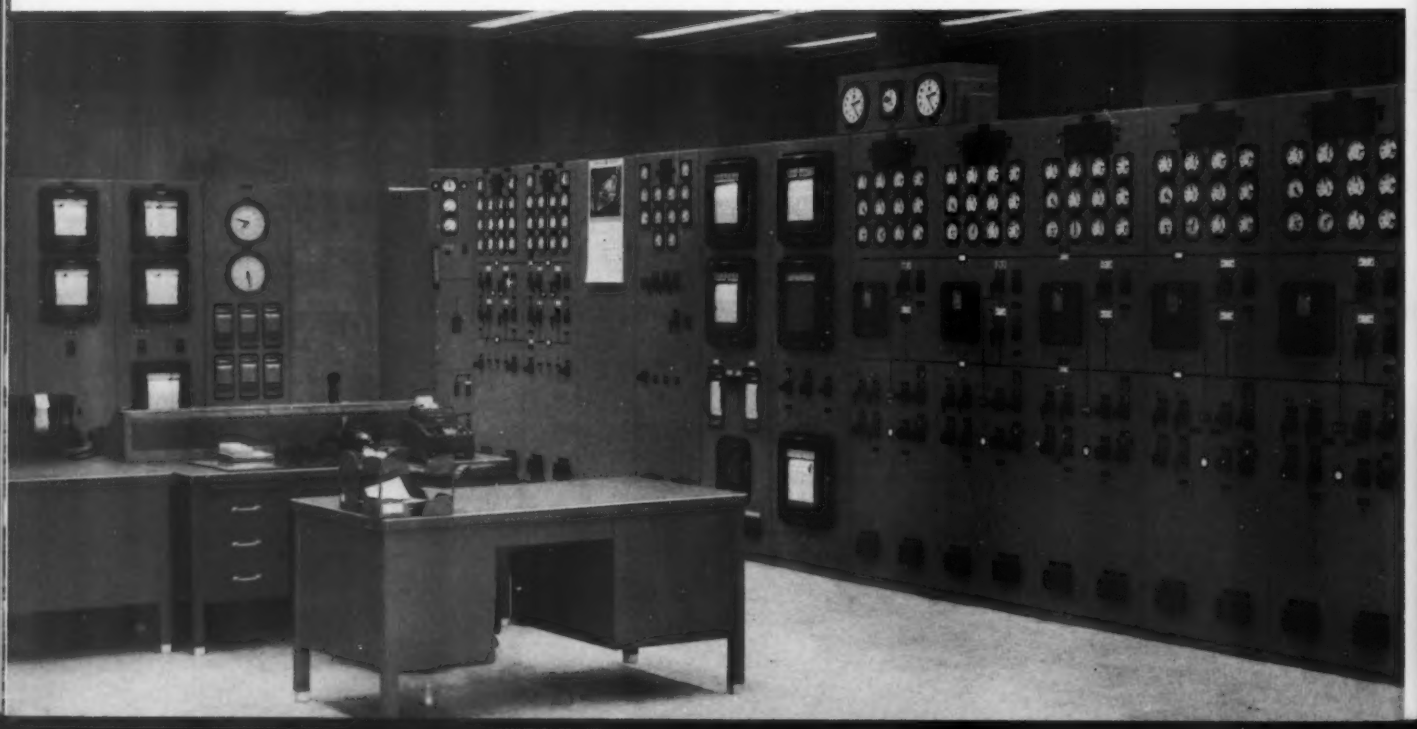
The forebay bridge across the Colorado River at Davis Dam forms a broad, two-lane, paved highway connecting western Arizona with southwestern Nevada. Davis Dam, and its appurtenant works, was constructed under supervision of the Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior.

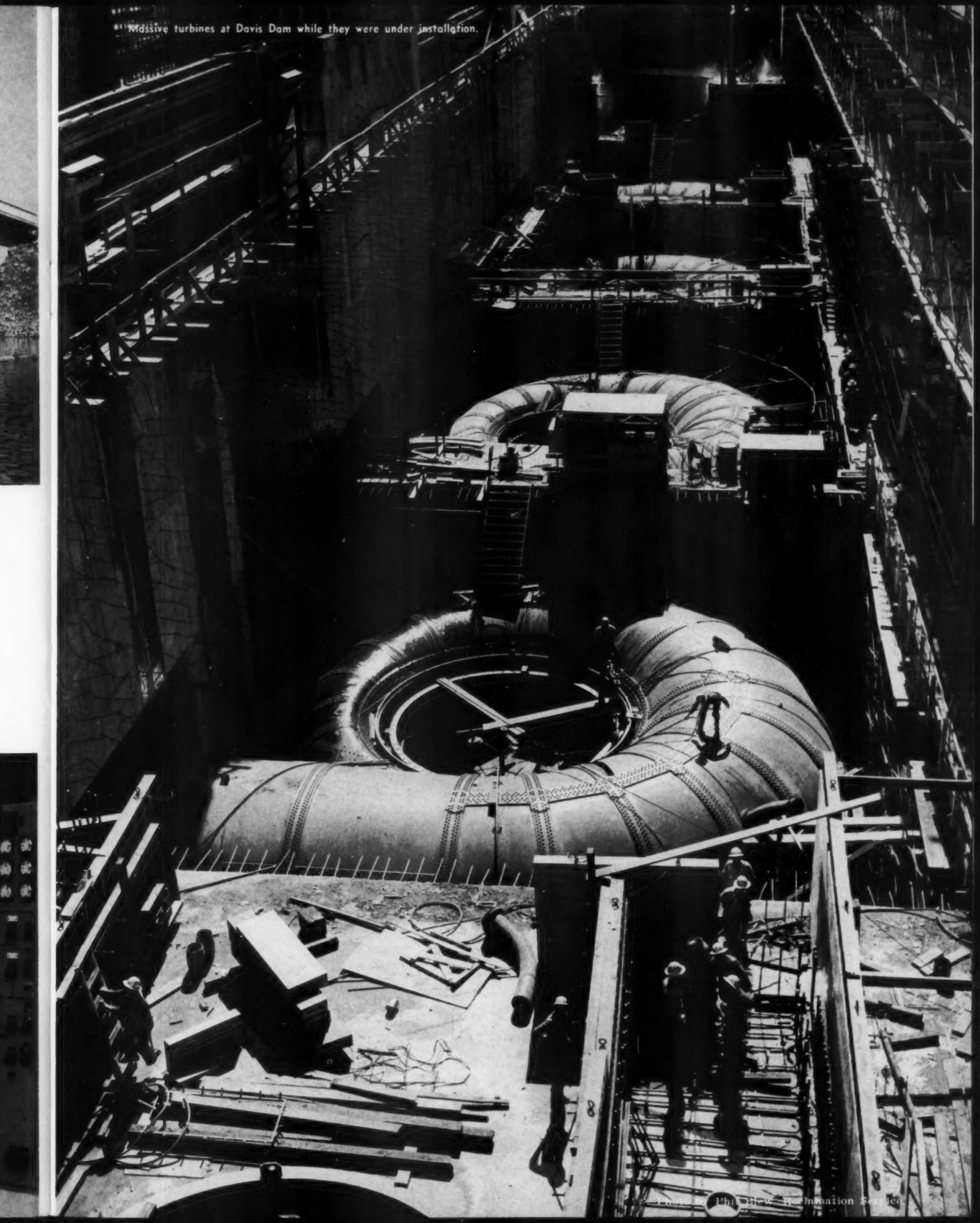
The control panel at Davis Dam is the heart of the works. From here the power supply, generated by the five big turbine-driven generators, is sent out to communities located in the southwestern section of the Nation, more particularly in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, where many factories are served.

↓

DAVIS DAM FACTS AND FIGURES

Dimensions:	
Structural height	200 feet
Hydraulic height	138 feet
Base width	1,400 feet
Crest width	50 feet
Crest length	1,600 feet
Elevation of crest	655 feet
Power Plant:	
Maximum head	138 feet
Number of units	5
Horsepower	311,000
KW capacity	225,000
Estimated average annual output:	
Firm	860,000,000 KWH
Secondary	215,000,000 KWH





Massive turbines at Davis Dam while they were under installation.

Mohave Lake is the result of Davis Dam across the river. Fishing, boating, all types of water sports and recreational facilities came to this part of the Nation, with the dam, where it was not available before.

← Davis Dam is served by Nevada State Route 77.

during the past half century in the western part of the Nation. Its functions are vital to the general overall project along the Colorado River and the Davis Dam unit is one of the major factors in the conservation program.

The dam, its power plant and appurtenant features, and some 1,100 miles of transmission lines were constructed at a cost of approximately $114,000,000.

High voltage switchyards near the power plant will provide the take-off point for a system of transmission lines and substations now being completed to interconnect the Davis, Hoover and Parker Dam power plants and to extend to load centers in central and southern Arizona, southern Nevada, and southern California.

Construction of Davis Dam and appurtenant works were authorized in April 1941. Actual construction began in August 1942. Some excavation was undertaken during the first few months, but inability to secure materials while World War II was in progress brought the work to a halt in December of the same year.

Work was resumed in March 1946. Approximately the first year thereafter was devoted to the excavation of the diversion and forebay channel and the foundations for the spillway and intake structures. Then

followed a period of intensive foundation grouting and preparations for concrete placement. Construction of the massive spillway and intake structures began in January 1948. The initial diversion of the river was accomplished in June 1948. Construction of the main dam embankment was started in September 1948, and completed in April 1949. The intake and spillway structures were substantially completed in the same month.

In January 1950, the six temporary diversion openings of the spillway structure were closed with concrete stop logs, and the first storage of water in the reservoir was begun. Placing of concrete in the six openings to complete the spillway sections was then initiated. The construction of the reinforced concrete power plant structure began in January 1949, and was completed in the summer of 1950. Early in 1951 the first of the huge generators started functioning, putting power in the line and this was followed by the completion of the remaining four. Current started flowing in the summer of 1952. At the present time the dam and its appurtenances are about 95 percent completed.

At present, tourist accommodations in the dam site area are limited. However, the completed works will be made accessible to the public, and it is expected that visitors' accommodations will be developed to meet the demand. Already many persons have come to view this great piece of conservation engineering, and when matters are finished it is expected thousands of tourists will visit the dam each year.

The National Park Service states that fishing and other concessions already operating in the area are moving to permanent locations and are enlarging and improving their facilities as the new lake reaches its permanent level. Additional facilities will be installed as necessary.

Davis Dam and its power plant should be placed on your traveling itinerary as a *must* when you visit the southwestern part of the Nation.

Searchlight, an old Nevada mining camp in the extreme southwestern corner of the State, is the gateway for travel to Davis Dam.

OLD HAMILTON

A LIVELY old Silver camp Hamilton was in 1868, shortly after the beginning. The rip-snorting era lasted a little more than 20 years. Then the camp parachuted back to the realization that it was fading out. In the meantime there was plenty of action. The rich silver ores found in the Treasure Hill mine, the Eberhardt and others kept the population agog from one New Year's celebration to the other.

After the discovery in 1865, the excited silver-mining fraternity flocked there in droves looking for riches and excitement until the population reached a figure estimated at 15,000 with more folks camping out in smaller groups in the surrounding hills.

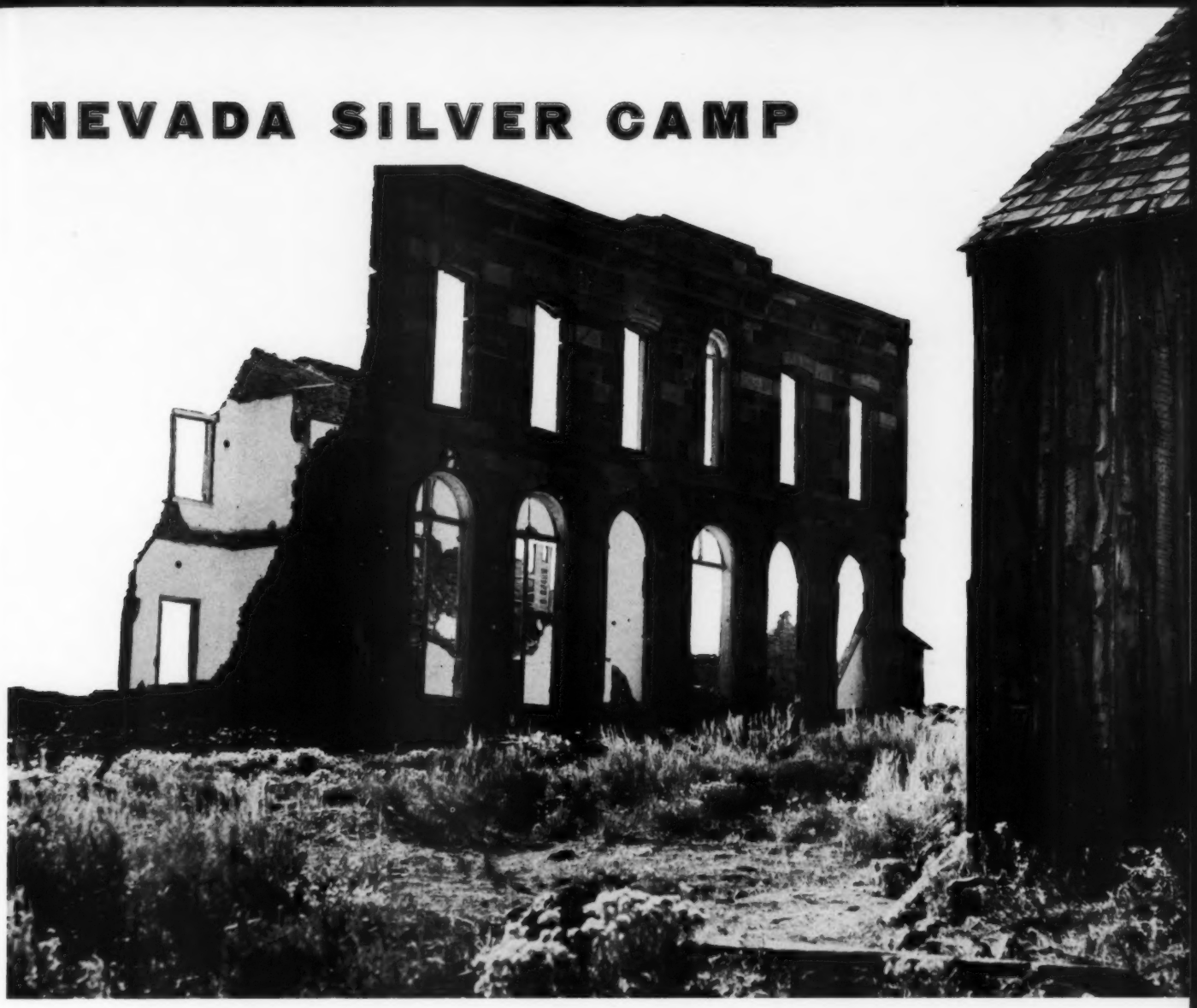
Indian Jim, also known as Napias Jim, returned a favor to A. J. Leathers in the form of a chunk of rich, silver-chloride ore. Indian Jim indicated to Leathers where he found it and then the scramble began. Later, from a hole 70 feet long, 40 feet wide and not over 25 feet deep the miners who were lucky enough to be in on that particular ground floor took out $3,000,000 in silver ore. That was considered tops at the time, and before the camp was finished the diggers had taken more than $29,000,000 out of the ground at Hamilton and its suburbs of Eberhardt and Treasure Hill.

The town was laid out in 1868 and before it reached the crest of its cycle there were at least 50 saloons, the county courthouse, many sturdy brick buildings which served as business houses and hotels, the bank building, even a little red school house and the jail. Then the usual thing happened. Hamilton had a big fire which wiped out most of the town. That was in 1885 and with the fire went the spirit of the camp for the mines already had shown signs of declination. Some of the stone used in the buildings was brought from England as ships' ballast.

During the severe winter of 1868–1869, it is said, two half-frozen miners hastily built a one-room cabin of stone only to find when spring came that the cabin was of high-grade silver ore. They tore it down and realized a profit of $75,000 from its sale.

Hamilton was the scene of great silver excitement when the camp was discovered in 1865. This view shows the present condition of the old ghost camp.

NEVADA SILVER CAMP



Crumbling walls, partly caved, are all that is left of this business block which was the pride of Hamilton in its boom days.

The first frame building was a saloon, one of the many establishments licensed in Hamilton's prime. The post office and Wells Fargo express building, built of brick in 1868, still stands.

The famous Withington Hotel, many of the rooms luxuriously equipped with fireplaces, is now only a shell of brick and stone. The $50,000 brick courthouse and jail, first headquarters of White Pine County, was built in 1870 and burned in 1885 after which (in 1887) the county seat was moved to Ely where it remains. The stone ruins of the old Smoky Mill stand on a hillside in the outskirts of Hamilton.

The end of Hamilton came almost as suddenly as the stampede which created the town. By 1873 the district production slowed, leaving only the poorer ores and base metals to prolong the camp's old age which came too soon.

Up in the White Pine range, about 8,000 feet elevation, the old camp, deserted and isolated, rests in its grave in the quiet solitude of the desert. It had its day and it was a glorious day. Now only the shells of several buildings remain to mark the place. Streets are still identifiable but grass grows on the high centers. The wooden structures are mostly caved in or leaning precariously. Much of the camp's material has been pilfered or carted away and all that remains of Hamilton is sad memories, a conglomeration of brick, stone, steel, timber and waste dumps.

Anyone can see what is left of Hamilton by turning off Highway U S 50 about 20 miles west of Ely and driving south into the high country. You can't miss the place. The road is fair and with careful driving no difficulty should be experienced. There are still a few road signs left showing that the Lincoln Highway (U S 50) passed that way years ago. That is, if some indiscreet marksman hasn't maliciously shot them full of holes. But Hamilton doesn't live there any more.

Rhyolite railroad depot, in use only a short time, is now a desert store.

RHYOLITE

Rhyolite, born in 1904 shortly after the big silver strike at Tonopah and the sensational gold discovery at Goldfield, was really an offshoot from Bullfrog the camp which produced the spectacular, copper-colored rocks shot through with gold. Rhyolite ore was rich, too. That's why many people floated to the site, a most desolate part of the southern Nevada desert. Gold was found in wide crevices in the native rhyolite rocks. The magnet, other than rich gold ore, was free lots which the camp's founder offered to miners who would build at Rhyolite and that sapped many from Bullfrog overnight. Such mines as the Keane-Wonder, the Montgomery-Shoshone, the Denver, the Tramp and the National Bank made Rhyolite history. The veins were shallow and production dwindled rapidly when the cream was skimmed off the top.

Rhyolite had three railroads. The Las Vegas and Tonopah line, built in there from Las Vegas, erected a plush depot, carried on for a time, then stopped running. The Tonopah and Tidewater, and the Bullfrog and Goldfield roads were there too but they departed with the debacle. Tracks and ties are all gone now; only the depot remains. The town was big as desert boom towns go, 8,000 population, two banks, a newspaper, a $50,000 schoolhouse, a hotel with baths, and an ice plant. That last item was a treasure. It kept beer cold and that was one thing Rhyolitians drank and plenty of. There were so many bottles laying around that one miner, named Kelly,

gathered and built himself a house of them. That is still one of the major attractions of Rhyolite. It contains many artifacts, curios, and mineral specimens.

The town was named after the prevailing volcanic rocks peculiar to the neighborhood. These are exposed in several strata but it seems there was only one layer containing pay dirt. The other layers were barren and discouraging. Rhyolite went down almost as fast as it came up. In 1912, eight years after it was discovered, all the buildings were unoccupied and everything except the bottle house and the depot closed down in 1918. The railroad station is now a casino and curio shop; only the bare front walls of the First National Bank stand as ghosts of the original busy money changing center; and the Porter building, once the town's principal department store, hasn't anything left but the front, on which the name is still boldly emblazoned in the steel beam.

CARRARA

Carrara connotes fine marble. Beautiful, black, mottled, white and pink marble of a high quality was its stock in trade. Like many of the gold camps fate was cruel to Carrara and it folded to enter the limbo of ghost towns. There was a 300-foot, 71-ton steel tube used as a kiln to calcine the marble which produced excellent cement. World War II and distance from markets messed up everything. Now there's nothing left but twisted steel, bare concrete footings, shells of buildings, some empty oil drums and other minor debris. Adjacent to highway U S 95, seven miles south of Beatty, it can look to the northwest and see Rhyolite. The high, conspicuously layered, varicolored mountains behind Carrara contain millions of perch of marble. Some day it may stage a comeback, who knows. West of the highway 12 miles below Carrara are seen the Nevada sand dunes.

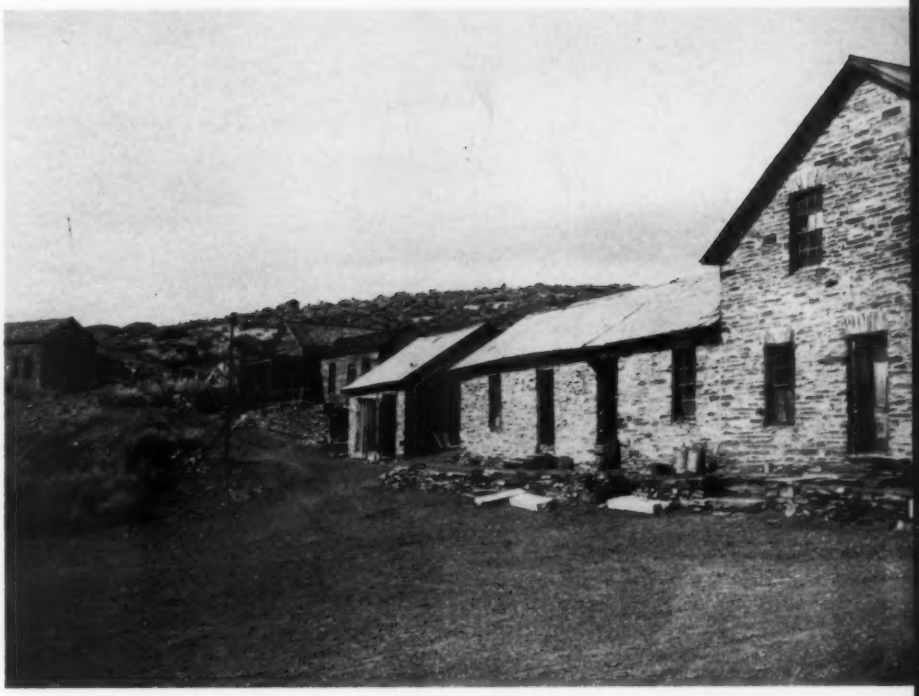
CANDELARIA

Candelaria, mining camp, was found by Mexicans in 1864. They worked the silver and gold mines for a time; the consequent town had ambitious ideas, developed strongly for a time, hit bottom and started going backwards. This cycle of growth and erosion continued for many years. After the town got a good start it was served by a railroad. One mine, the Northern Belle, produced a million dollars annually for ten years. Mills, houses, stores, a hotel or two, and saloons flourished during the boom. Recently the Northern Belle properties were rehabilitated in an attempt to capture and successfully treat the deeper sulphide ores found under the lava cap, so conspicuous all over the old town. Candelaria is seven miles from The Bonanza Highway over a good dirt road, about 10 miles south of Mina.

The ghost of Belmont stalks the Nye County desert country today. A good camp in 1865, it lasted until 1885; was the county seat and had a nice red-brick courthouse of substantial parts. The camp, before it dwindled, produced more than $15,000,000. The Cosmopolitan, with its wooden awning, was the elite store of its time; now it is in ruins. The county seat went to Tonopah when the boom started there.

Belmont

Another landmark of the old Nevada mining camp of Belmont, now a ghost town about 35 miles northeast of Tonopah, was this stone structure used as a mercantile establishment. One lone prospector now occupies the place and keeps vigil in the hope that a new strike may revive the life of the town which is in the Toquima Range at an altitude of 7,000 feet. High-grade, surface-enriched, silver-chloride ores were found there in 1865 and kept the town humming for many years. It was the county seat until Tonopah was discovered in 1900. Belmont declined and eventually its mining activity ceased entirely.



Belmont's main street as it presently appears. Many years ago miners, horses, and wagons tramped down the earth with their loads of ore going to the mill and supplies coming to the mines. The old courthouse, built of brick, still stands to mark the town's former opulence. Time has taken its toll, the building stands gaunt, sans doors and windows, against a backdrop of high hills and heavy growth of sage in the flats. At one time Belmont boasted a newspaper, a number of saloons, and several business stores. It was from Belmont that Jim Butler and his burro started on their trek to Klondike in southwestern Nevada in 1900 and eventually laid the foundation for the birth and growth of present-day Tonopah. Belmont declined while Tonopah thrived.

Photo by Atwater, Staff

Mornin' on the Desert

Mornin' on the desert, and the wind is blowin' free,
And it's ours, jest for the breathin', so let's fill up, you and me.
No more stuffy cities, where you have to pay to breathe,
Where the helpless human creatures move and throng and strive and seethe.

Mornin' on the desert, and the air is like a wine,
And it seems like all creation has been made for me and mine.
No house to stop my vision, save a neighbor's miles away,
And the little dobe shanty that belongs to me and May.

Lonesome? Not a minute! Why, I've got these mountains here,
That were put here jest to please me, with their blush an' frown an' cheer.
They're waitin' when the summer sun gets too sizzlin' hot,
An' we jest go campin' in 'em with a pan an' coffee pot.

Mornin' on the desert—I can smell the sagebrush smoke,
I hate to see it burnin', but the land must sure be broke.
Ain't it jest a pity that wherever man may live
He tears up much that's beautiful that the good God has to give?

Sagebrush ain't so pretty? Well, all eyes don't see the same.
Have you ever saw the moonlight turn it to a silvery flame?
An' that greasewood thicket yonder—well, it smells just awful sweet
When the nightwind has been shakin' it—for it's smell is hard to beat.

Lonesome? Well, I guess not. I've been lonesome in a town,
But I sure do love the desert with it's stretches wide and brown.
All day through the sagebrush here the wind is blowin' free,
And it's ours jest for the breathin,' so let's fill up, you and me.

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